

The Right to Freedom

№3(99)
February 2002

The Bulletin of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna"

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT...

In 2001, 7 Belarusian citizens were sentenced to the death penalty. 11 more people were sentenced to life sentence, the Chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Court Valantsin Sukala informed said at the meeting with journalists in Minsk on February 11. According to Sukala, now 5 people are awaiting for the judgment-trial.

WHERE ARE IS THE PROMISED \$100?

On February 13 at 4 p.m. on at Freedom Square the people started a picket against the impoverishment of people. The picket participants held the posters: "Where are is the promised \$100? "Current regime guarantees poverty and extinction of our people", "Let him build market socialism on the Moon", etc. The picket lasted for 30 minutes. The police detained the organizers of the picket: Valery Pawlotski, Uladzislaw Tokaraw, Lavon Pankratsenka, Valery Vysotski and Siarhei Shapira.

MASS STAFF REDUCTIONLARGE- SCALE LAY-OFFS

Minsk Tractor Factory started mass reduction of the stafflarge-scale layoffs. The MTF administration explains their decision by the difficult financial situation. The staff will be cut down by 10% (about 1900 people).The first to be dismissed on the grounds of redundancy will be the people, who have some «social protection»: pensioners, who continue to work.The factory staff is overwhelmed with confusion and anxious expectations.



EUROPE? LOVE PROHIBITED!

The first celebration of St. Valentine's Day took place 5 years ago – On February 14, 1997. Belarusian young people chose the "Belarus into Europe!" slogan for St. Valentine's Day celebration. The tradition is to start the action with visiting the embassies of the European countries and congratulating the diplomatic corps. In the evening young people gather in Minsk down town to present Valentine cards to the passers-by and remind them about the holiday. Belarusian authorities also have a tradition. Their tradition is to carry out a harsh reprisal against the youth...

On February 14, St. Valentine's Day, at 5 p.m. members of the Young Front started their march along the main avenue of Minsk. The Minsk city executive Executive committee Committee banned the action, but the Young Front decided still to still carry onkeep up the tradition of the "Action of Love" on St. Valentine's Day. In the morning of February 14 the top officials of the city police ordered their subordinates from the Savetski DBIA "to demonstrate an adequate reaction to the actions of the action participants". To put it simple, that means permission for mass arrests. People

in civil clothes immediately stopped every effort to unwind white-red-white flags. About 300 young people gathered at Yakub Kolas Square and started their march along Skaryna Avenue. Some of the procession participants had white-red-white, as well as European Union flags in their hands. The procession went from Yakub Kolas Square to the Academy of Sciences, then to Khmialnitski Street. Police wanted the young people to go to Banhalor Square, but they returned back to Skaryna Avenue through communicating courtyards.

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EUROPE? LOVE PROHIBITED!

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Special-Assignment Police Force Squad met the procession near the Polytechnic Academy. They started instant and savage mass detentions, beating and dragging people to onto the police buses. Pavel Seviarynets and about 30 action participants at the head of the procession were detained immediately. Some of the detained were only 8-10 years old. All the detainees were taken to Savetski DBIA. Some girls and guys boys were chased to the subway, stores and courtyards and beaten with truncheons.

By the way, police started detaining the participants on their way to the place of the action – Yakub Kolas Square. Thus, Natalia Kiyko and Siarhei Lisichonak were detained before they got to the square. The police took the young people to Savetski District Board of Internal Affairs (DBIA) and kept them there for 3 hours. The police did not draw up reports. In 3 hours the young people were released without any charges brought against them. During their detention in the police station they managed to make an (incomplete) list of other people detained during the action:

1. **Pavel Seviarynets**
2. **Chaikow**
3. **Siarhei Kastsiukevich**
4. **Artur Finkevich** (under age)
5. **Iryna Viatkina** (15)
6. **V. Balashevich**
7. **A. Siarheichik**
8. **Andrus Kazlow**
9. **Vasil Parfiankow**
10. **Siarzhuk Herasimovich**
11. **Siarzhuk Pisarenka** (16)
12. **Hanna Salawyova** (17)
13. **Zmitser Awchynninkaw** (15)
14. **Siarzhuk Trapkin** (15)
15. **Kiryl Shcharbovich** (14)
16. **Ivan Hapanovich** (13)
17. **Zmitser Hapanovich** (11)
18. **Aleh Snedchik** (15)
19. **Zmitser Vaitko** (16)
20. **Volha Charnykh** (15) –(Orsha).

There is information that over 30 action participants were taken to Savetski DBIA. The list is incomplete because some of the detained refused to tell us their names, because they were afraid of problems and pressure in their schools and universities.

On February 15, Savetski district court started considering administrative cases, initiated against the participants of the "Action of Love".

The judge made a decision only on the case of one of the 6 accused. Judge Ruslan Kazadayew fined **Stas Ivashkevich** 20 minimal wages (\$120) for "participation in an unauthorized march" (Art. 167-1 of the Code of Administrative Infringements).

Trials over **Siarhei Herasimovich**, **Vasil Parfiankow**, **Andrei Kazlow**, and **Dzmitry Dashkevich** are postponed to February 18, because they appealed for advocates to participate in the trials.

Young Front leader **Pavel Seviarynets** will be tried on February 19.

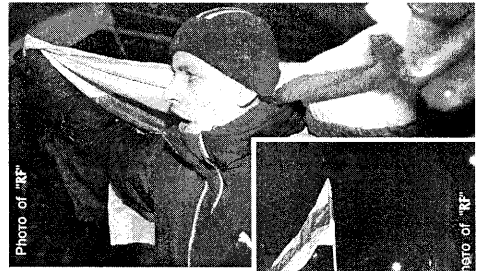
St. Valentine's Day actions took place in 44 Belarusian towns simultaneously. The Young Front campaign will last for three months and take place in 110 towns and cities. The actions (which are called The Day of Europe) will be finished with a poll in order to find out where Belarusian young people want to live - in Russia or Europe.

On February 14, in Homel, during the youth action, dedicated to St. Valentine's Day, people in civil clothes detained 3 under age participants: **Yury Vasiluk**, **Alexander Zhumaw** and **Ihar Powzhyk**.

Zmitser Karpenka was detained in police station # 1 of Centralny district of Homel, where he came to learn find out what had happened to his friends. The police made the teenagers to write explanation notes. After that they were released without calling for their parents (that is a violation of law). Zmitser Karpenka received a summons to appear in court for February 15; he was accused of resistance to the police officers. It was found out during the trial that the report of his detention had been drawn up with violations. The judge sent the police report back for re-workingwriting. Anatol Paplawny, activist of Homel "Viasna" believes that agents of KGB detained the teenagers.

Information
Department of the Human
Rights Center "Viasna".

Pictures: the evening of February 14 in Minsk: march and detentions...



SCARED PEOPLE ARE EASY TO RULE

TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY AND TOTAL FEAR

In To a variouslying degree, the number of mental diseases is growings all over the world. Doctors say, the spreading speed of transitional states is so high, that disregarded neglected mental diseases could lead among the diseases with lethal outcome. The spreading level of mental pathologies in Belarus is very high – up to 15% of the population this way or another may meets psychiatrpsychiatry criteria. Experts admit offer the basic reasons for that: instability of the social and economic situation, as well as absence of preventive support to citizens on early stages of a mental disorder. In Belarus the number of mental diseases is growing grows against the background of spreading drug addiction and alcoholism. Last year over 3,000 cases of suicide were registered. It's worth paying attention to the fact, that two thirds of suicides in Belarus are connected to alcoholic psychoses. Problems of alcoholism and drug addiction are becoming the major threat to the mental health of Belarusian citizens.

ALCOHOLIC PSYCHOSIS

I talked to a former patient of the State mental hospital, who got there in the state of alcoholic psychosis, when he had tried to cut his veins. He is a pretty young guy – he was born in 1968. He asked me not to mention his namerequested anonymity, now he is ok and works on a construction job site in Minsk.

I noted down his story down: "At first I drank. Then I didn't sleep for 48 hours. Then I started hallucinating. What did I see? Darkness. All kinds of rubbish. Pieces of wire, which wound me round and stroke me with electricity. I was trying to escape from the wires. What else? I watched "horror movies"...

It got unbearable. In the dead of night I ran to the local clinic and asked a teh guard to call for a field ambulance. I explained I had hallucinations. The guard called for a the police squad instead of an ambulance. Two policemen came. I asked them to take me to mental hospital. They asked where I live and took me home. I asked one of the policemen to call for an ambulance. At first he said, I won't call! I say, please, do, otherwise I'll cut the veins, I feel so bad now! He called, but they did not react. The policemen left.

Since they've left, my mother had called for an ambulance twice. She said, my son has psychosis, he has auditory and optic hallucinations, he is going to cut the veins.

I was waiting for an ambulance until morning. Then I took a scalpel and started striking it against my veins. I didn't feel any pain. Then it seemed

that the scalpel was blunt, and I was bleeding too slowly. I threw the scalpel away and grabbed a razor, for the blood to run faster. That's when all 3 ambulances came: the one, a policeman called for, and the two, called by my mother.

They bandaged me in a regular clinic, and then took me to a psychiatric hospital. There my hallucinations continued. They brought another patient at the same time with me. At first I didn't pay attention to him. All of a sudden I hear him say: "So, you drank till all is was blue!" I looked at him – he was silent. I turned away and again: "You drunkard... now they took you here to cut out your brain, liver, kidney and to sell it abroad". I look at him – he does not open his mouth. He was silent in reality. Now I realize, I had an auditory hallucination".

ANXIETY NEUROSIS

Anatol Helda is a doctor of medicine. He practices in the State mental clinic, and simultaneously does a psychiatric research in the field of psychiatry. He says: "Very often a psychological factor (psychological de-adaptation in the family or the job) is an initialle key for clinical manifestation of a nervous breakdown. The term "de-adaptation" is widely used; it means disorder of normal psychological communications, disorder of psychological microclimate. Usually a person feels comfortable in a society with a healthy psychological climate. If the climate is broken – regular conflicts, quarrels, to say nothing of physical levers – all that leads a person to the state of emotional breakdown. An emotional breakdown leads directly to mental derangement – it can be depression, neurasthenia, and various anxiety neuroses. There are lots of phobias – they develop depending on a concrete situation. It can be a general fear – when a person is afraid of everything. An anxiety neurosis is a serious disease, it can be a portent sign of another an imminent mental disease.

Psychological de-adaptation in society is very often an initialle button for manifestation of such disease as schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is a genetic disease, but a person with a family history of the diseasehereditary background can stay healthy until an old age, or get become mentally ill early in life in an unfavorable environment.

A doctor, who knows what the "initialle button" is, can "cut it off" from the life of a patient, and thus, remove anxiety, fear, and improve the mood. However, after treatment a patient returns to the environment, which created pre-conditions for a disease.

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One ofa Belarusian hospitals, where people are treated for alcoholism.

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The environment did not change. In some time the disease will recrudescence. We treat a person, put him on his legs-feet, but he returns back "home", and gets a trauma again.... That's why one needs to look for a factor, which provokes a disease, and try to eliminate it from the life of a patient.

Talking about the reasons, which might lead to suicide, sometimes a person starts hearing voices in his head. He understands that something is going the wrong way, he is scared by the thought that he is going mad. Very often such people consciously commit a suicide. They realize that they are sick, and their disease is incurable. They see that they are losing their professional skills and social status, things don't go well in their family, they are tired of treatment. Finally, they come up with a pressing thought that the life is over... And they commit a suicide.

Suicides are very often committed under the influence of "voices", which call: "Kill yourself!" Or: "Kill your son, daughter!" Fearing, that they really might do that (a the voice orders, and thea sick person obeys), they kill themselves. Such cases are very common in our practice. Often patients come to the clinic themselves, and tell their doctor: "I again heard a voice, which orders me to do something bad to my children or to myself".

In Minsk we have a city psychotherapeutic center, where we treat patients anonymously. If a person does not want to name himself, he can come and talk to doctors anonymously. If treatment is needed, and the client agrees, we will treat him anonymously. However, if a person has a serious psychic disease, a doctor will inform him that an official treatment in residential an in-patient psychiatric facility institution is needed – in a psychiatric hospital, either neuroses department, or general psychiatry department.

However, compulsory hospitalization is illegal, excluding the cases, when a sick person constitutes poses a menace threat to the surrounding people or to himself. Only in case of social danger it is it legal to use involuntary forcible hospitalization, which can prevent a tragedy. For instance, a patient did not want to go to hospital, and then jumped out of the window. A psychiatrist is able to foresee such a tendency and to involuntary forcibly hospitalize such a person, even without his agreement. If immediate help is needed, we call for an ambulance. In case there is no social danger, we recommend a course of treatment, but we cannot do anything, if a patient does not give his agreement. Medical psychiatric practice is docu-

mented. Every psychiatrist follows the legislation in his practice".

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

In the late 1960's American psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchical theory of human needs, in which all the basic needs are at the bottom, and the needs concerned connected with a man's highest potential are at the top. The hierarchic theory is often represented as a pyramid, with the larger, lower levels representing the lower needs, and the upper point representing the need for self-actualization.

Biological and Physiological Needs (for oxygenair, food, water) are on the lowest level. The next level is safety and security needs, which should be understood not only as physical safety, but also as social security, psychological comfort, absence of fear, peace – control over current events. The third level of the pyramid consists of Social (Love, Affection and Belongingness) Needs. One needs to love and be loved. Ego / Esteem Needs are on the fourth level. People need a stable, high level of self-respect, and respect from others in order to feel satisfied, self-confident and valuable. The highest in the hierarchy is Self-actualization.

Person's behavior is motivated by the needs of a certain level. If the first level is not satisfied, a person ignores

needs that are higher in the hierarchy. For instance, in order to find food, one can risk his safety.

Political behavior of many of our citizens is significantly motivated by the elementary needs: they are fighting for a better life without poverty. Acceleration of political instability, society conflicts, crime gives rise to anxiety, fear, and psychological discomfort – the safety need is in full action. Until the first 2 levels are satisfied, it is hard to expect a person to strive for freedom and self-actualization.

The problem of satisfying the needs of the first three levels continues to be urgent in our country. The There is a saying has it: "history grows into the present". The total fear, which had dominated the Soviet society only 2 decades ago, did not disappear. Fear can be an advantage for the authorities: it is easier to rule scared people. The problem of fear is still urgent for our society. Fear paralyses morals and petrifies initiative.

State should be respected, not feared. The power, based on fear, is unstable and unstable.

Nevertheless, the society is sinking in the ocean of fear and anxiety before our very eyes. This is the fear not only of the power structures, but also for one's own life, future, well-being, for possible terrible events and disasters, which might occur...

Palina STSEPANENKA.



ZINAIDA GANCHAR APPEALS

TO CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL OF BELARUSIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IVONKA SURVILLA

To Chairperson of the
Council of Belarusian
People's Republic
Mrs. Ivonka Survilla

Dear Mrs. Survilla!

On September 16, 1999 my husband, Viktor Ganchar, disappeared. There's obviously no need to tell you about his role in the Belarusian politics and why A. Lukashenka considered my husband to be his most dangerous political opponent. My husband respected the interests of our country and its people most of all. He was incorrupt and principled, never acted against his conscience or pursued his own minor interest.

It's a pity that I have nobody to apply to in my country: the efforts of the Belarusian public give no result. There's no sense to in relying on the sincerity of the present incumbent Belarusian authorities as, according to the documents published in the Belarusian press, A. Luka-



Photo of "RP"

Zinaida GANCHAR

shenka, Prosecutor General Viktor Sheiman and ex-Minister of Internal Affairs Yu. Sivakow have some relation to the disappearance of my husband. Of course, I am not a judge, but to my mind the behavior of the authorities and the official investigation only confirms the version of those documents.

Dear Mrs. Survilla! You

possess a great authority among Belarusians all over the world and I ask you to pass the truthful information about what is going on in our country to our compatriots. I also ask You and the Belarusian diasporae to inform the Governments of the countries where they live about the issue of political terror in Belarus. At present only the international community can make Lukashenka tell the truth concerning the fate of my husband and the other people who disappeared.

With Your support, I would like to appeal to all the Belarusians of the world: help! Give me a piece of advice, what can be done in such a situation?

We can't keep silence when, at the beginning of the 21st century our country is in danger of sinking into blood and terror, as it was in 1937...

Respectfully Yours,

Zinaida Ganchar.

dent Putin deserve attention, for it is largely owing to his support that Lukashenka retains grip on power, which is explained by the definition "for Russia's strategic interests". Unfortunately, "Russia's strategic interests" are way more important for Mr. Putin than human rights abuses in Belarus.

Our nation is left on its own. The civilized nation cannot tolerate crimes and humiliation of their people, relatives and neighbors, their culture and language.

Part of the society, especially the young people, understand this pretty well. Given the youths and females, who are compassionate with you, all the people of good will join together and courageously take to the streets of the Belarusian towns in order to get the answer over the destiny of the missing ones – just as people in other countries stand for their rights – we will overthrow dictatorship without weapons and clashes.

BNR Council and the Belarusian national community will keep requesting help from the free world in order to reveal truth about your husband's destiny.

With deep respect,

Ivonka Survilla,
chair of Belarusian
People's Republic's
Council".



Ivonka SURVILLA

Foreign Minister of Canada Lloyd Axworthy. I know for sure that the representatives of the Canadian government raised this issue at the international forums. Members of the BNR (Belarusian People's Republic) Council in the USA and Europe also addressed their governments. Unfortunately, the dictatorship, which holds on to power by force, can only be convinced by force. Especially when it is indifferent to the nation's destiny.

However, I believe that your letters to Russian-presi-

"I was reading with great sadness your letter of February 1, for after since September 1999 I have been 'm reading everything that touches upon the destiny fate of your respected husband Viktor Ganchar. I know how it hurts, because I myself went through a similar tragedy in my childhood, when the NKVD agents carried away my innocent father. My mother wept for a year then, telling everyone in vain that her husband was blameless.

The history of our poor homeland, regrettably, repeats, but the people aren't willing nor are able to comprehend it. Being concerned with how to make ends meet, they fail to understand that tomorrow their turn may come and there will be no one to protect them.

I'd like to tell you, dear Mrs. Ganchar, that we, along with the rest of the free world, see your efforts. Your first open letter to Boris Yeltsin in September 1999 I myself translated into English and sent, alongside with my personal request, to a the then

WE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH

YURY ZAITSAW
DEMANDS

TO FIND THE PEOPLE,
GUILTY OF HIS
SON'S DEATH...

Yury Zaitsaw is the father of Andrei, a Homel activist of the unregistered youth resistance movement Zubr. Andrei committed a suicide under the KGB pressure. His father intends to secure institution of an action on the fact of get his son's death officially investigated. Yury Zaitsaw filed a complaint to Savetski district court. He complains against the prosecutor's resolution to reject legal action-institution of prosecution, and, correspondingly, the investigation of the circumstances of Andrei's death.

Zaitsaw thinks, the rejection is unreasoned, and, in principle, can not have any reasoning, because the prosecutor's office did not check the circumstances, connected to Andrei's tragic action. In particular, Zaitsaw refers to the fact that the prosecutor's office did not interrogate a number of some witnesses. The witnesses could have confirmed the fact that Andrei had told them about his persecution by a person, who introduced himself as an agent of the Homel Oblast KGB Board. Besides that, Yury Zaitsaw believes, the investigators did not pay enough attention to Andrei's application to the Belarusian Helsinki Committee. Andrei informed BHC about KGB efforts to recruit him as an informant. There is also a recording of his telephone conversation with a recruiter. By the way, and Andrei's friends witnessed the conversation, too.

The father of the 24-year-old Andrei Zaitsaw believes there is enough evidence to infer the identity of the KGB agent, who induced his son to cooperate, and to institute a criminal action against him.

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CHRONICLE

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EVENTS FACTS COMMENTS

February 2 is the birthday of Kastus Kalinowski. On this day local Zubr activists in cooperation with some other youth organizations laid flowers to the memorial sign dedicated to the rebels of 1863-1864, which is situated at the building of the railway station. After that Zubrs have performed a survey among the young people of the city related to their attitude towards this legendary personality. More than 60 people were questioned. It is disappointing that some young people found it difficult to answer the proposed questions.

On February 6 the famous Belarusian writers Yanka Bryl, Sviatlana Aleksievich, Henadz Burawkin, Siarhei Zakonnikaw, Ryhor Baradulin, Anatol Viartsinski and Uladzimir Arlow addressed Prime Minister Henadz Navitski and Vice Premier Uladzimir Drazhyn with a letter. In their letter they state, that "the top officials are determined to strangle the Union of Belarusian writers, paying little heed to the image that our country enjoys in the eyes of the world's intellectuals". The letter also mentions that in 1997 the authorities deprived the Union of Belarusian Writers (UBW) of its property – the polyclinics belonging to the Literature fund Fund and the Palace of Literature, lawfully purchased by the UBW on the money from sold books. Although, according to the organization's statute, its property cannot be nationalized, the state still did that, pledging that it would finance the Union and its activities out of the budget funds. "However, on July 3, 2001 the transfer of funds by the Ministry of Finances has come to a halt, although the sum in question couldn't even be compared to the one, earned through utilizing the property, taken away from the writers." – reads the letter. The literary people call upon the government to "restore justice" and to "strictly fulfill the commitments which they bound themselves with".

On February 11 we learned that it's been 19 days since the family and friends saw 24 year old Yuras Korban. Korban is the Chairperson of Vitebsk Center of

Civic Initiatives "Kontur". Yuras disappeared in the night of January 19-20. On his way home he called his mother and said he would be home very soon. But he came home neither that evening, nor the next day. In several days he called his mother and friends and said in a very strange voice that he was OK and would come back soon. After that more than a week passed, and there is no more information from or about him. Yuras's mother applied to the police.

On February 11 UN Human Rights Committee made the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus review the case of "Viasna" activist Ales Kaputski and cancel the fine. Ales Kaputski, 39, a Maladechna activist of "Viasna": "It happened in the autumn of 2000, during the parliamentary election boycott campaign. I was walking home by a local market, and saw agitation materials of the candidates near the entrance to the market. I posted a sticker "Boycott-2000" at the same place. The policemen appeared out of the blue and said: "What are you doing here?" They detained me and took to the police station. I refused to sign their report. They told me to come to the police station the next morning, at 8 o'clock, and they would take me to court. However, in the night I got a fever heat – I became ill". In spite of the illness of "Viasna" activist, on November 16, 2000 his administrative case was considered. Kaputski was absent during the court session, and that was a violation of the legisla-

tion. Maladechna City Court found Ales Kaputski guilty of violation of Art. 167 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Infringements, and fined Kaputski 2 minimal wages. Ales Kaputski appealed against the court decision, but both Minsk regional Oblast court and the Supreme Court left the previous decision unaltered. Kaputski paid the fine. However, in the spring of 2001 he appealed to the UN Human Rights Committee, and received their reply: Kaputski was found not guilty under international legislation. The Supreme Court had to reconsider the case and to finally cancel the decision of Maladechna City Court. Kaputski received got back the money, which he had paid as a fine, back.

On February 12 Orsha city court gathered for its 4th (and last) session on the case of Viktor Andreyew, "Kutseina" editor-in-chief. Judge Angelika Kazlova postponed the trials 3 times during the last month. Only on February 13 the editor of independent newspaper "Kutseina" finally learned about the outcome of the trial. The judge decided that the financial police should return the risograph, confiscated from "Kutseina" before the presidential election. However, all the 4 seized computers are left as confiscated. Viktor Andreyew is fined 20 minimal wages (about \$120). Judge Angelika Kazlova motivated her decision exclusively by the fact, that there was the layout of newspaper "Uskhod Batskawshchyny", that had the figure with indication 29299 copies, saved on the hard drive of one

of the computers – and in August the police confiscated 368 copies of the newspaper, together with the risograph. "Uskhod Batskawshchyny" editor-in-chief Yuri Sanko explained in court that those copies had printing defects and were not meant to be distributed. But the judge did not accept this such explanation and found Andreyew guilty of violating Art. 154 of the Code of Administrative Offences Infringements, which provides for confiscation of the equipment, used for publishing bigger than permitted number of copies. Viktor Andreyew stated that he did not agree with the judge's decision, at least for the reason that, according to the verdict, all 4 computers are to be confiscated, and not the one, whose hard disk contained the layout. Viktor Andreyew plans to complain against protest the verdict in the city public prosecutor's office, to in the regional court and to in the Justice department of the region Oblast administration.

On February 13 public prosecutor Fiodar Shedaw stated that the culpability of Ihnatovich and his group was completely proved in court. The episodes of the abduction of the ORT cameraman Zavadski, assassination of the families of the Ahaevs and the Nasibaws in Minsk, Yasko in Barysaw and Kotaw in Marjina Maryina Horka, and other crimes including gangsterism and armed robbery, were called proved, reports RFE/RL. Thus, referring to the Article 139 of the Criminal Code, the Public prosecutor asks the court to sentence Valery Ihnatovich, Maxim Malik, Siarhei Savushkin and Alaksei Huz to the capital punishment, that is stipulated by this article. One of the attorneys, Siarhei Tsurko, made a statement. Tsurko defends the interests of Zmitser Zavadski's wife, Sviatlana. Tsurko allegedly did not support the opinion of the prosecutor about the accountability of Ihnatovich's guilt and his accomplice partner in crime Malik, of Zavadski's abduction. Siarhei Tsurko considers that their guilt was not established, and insists on continuation of the investigation and search for Zavadski. Yesterday the attorney of Zavadski's mother, Ihar Aksiionchyk, made the a statement for journalists. He has made several resolute statements about the public prosecutor's office leadership. Aksiionchyk called head of the public prosecutor's office Viktor Sheiman the main suspect in the case of Zavadski, and more-



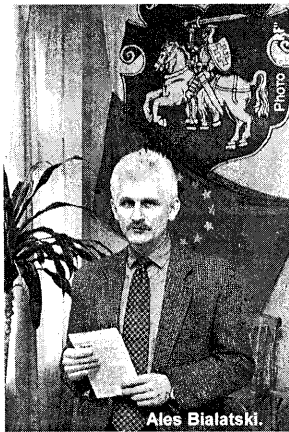
On February 11, at noon over 50 people formed a living "Chain of Concerned People" at the walls of outside the prison on Kalvaryiskaya Street.

This day marked 4 years since the imprisonment of Andrei Klimaw. Four years ago the regime started cynical reprisal over against MP and businessman Andrei Klimaw. The prisoner of consciousness, unlawfully sentenced on fake-upforced charges, has already spent almost 1.5 thousand days and nights in prison. Andrei's family, friends, colleagues and just ordinary Belarusian citizens, who care about their repressed compatriots, gathered at the prison walls. Numerous police officers in uniform and in civil clothes video-recorded/filmed the event.

ver he said that it was Luka-shenka who had ordered to stop investigation of this case. Aksionchyk is positive that Ihnatovich and his associates are at in fault, but he believes that the real architects masterminds of this crime where not named. On the same day the public prosecutor's office has responded severely to the words of the attorney. The national public prosecutor's office's press secretary called Aksionchyk's allegations "slandorous" and said that the "reaction will be harsh, but exclusively lawful".

On February 13 friends and colleagues of Yuras Korban organized a press conference about his disappearance. Yuras Korban is the leader of the Vitebsk Center of Youth Initiatives "Kontur". Ales Bialatski, chairperson of human rights center "Viasna", stated: "Kontur" is quite active in the non-political "Get Out the Vote" campaign. They helped to organize "Independent Monitoring" in Vitebsk. Obviously, we should demand active reaction from the police. Yuras's mother applied to the police long ago, and we still haven't noticed that they started searching for Yuras and investigating the case". Bialatski believes Minsk police and Committee for Financial Investigation should also get involved. Recently, the Committee for Financial Investigation initiated a criminal case against the Vitebsk Center of Youth Initiatives, which was headed by Yuras Korban. They accused him of rendering financial support to the non-governmental organizations of the Vitebsk Oblastregion.

On February 15 (Friday) the office of the Belarusian Students Association was robbed. At about 7 p.m. two young men, armed with knives, burst into the office during the weekly meeting of the new organization members. Brandishing knives, the criminals ordered everybody to lie down on the floor. They broke the fax machine, took a computer, a modem, some private belongings of the students (a winter-coat, a mobile phone, a pager, and keys). They kicked and beat the present students. BSA members are sure that the crime was aimed at intimidating the students. The demonstrative and cynical nature of the robbery witnesses the robbers have some relation to the state structures. When the strangers left the students called for police. However, the policemen asked more questions about the activities of BSA, than about the incident.



Ales Bialatski.



HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IS AS BAD AS USUAL

On February 12, 2002 Human Rights Center "Viasna" presented its annual "Chronicle Review of the violations of human rights in Belarus in 2001". The text and the pictures of the "Chronicle..." can be found on "Viasna" web-site: www.spring96.org. During the presentation "Viasna" chairperson Ales Bialatski underlined that "the human rights situation

in Belarus is as bad as usual". The volume of the "Chronicle...-2001" grew by 20%. The book contains over 200 pages.

The biggest number of human rights abuses was registered during presidential elections. The Freedom Day celebration and persecution of Kurapaty defenders also scored in the number of human rights abuses.

PROSECUTOR LAYS CHARGES AGAINST "PAHONIA"



"Right to Freedom" keeps track of the events, happening around independent newspaper "Pahonia", which had been closed down by the authorities.

On February 4 "Pahonia" journalist Pavel Mazheika was again summoned to Hrodna Oblast Prosecutor's office. Investigator of cases of particular importance Aleh Kulevich was especially interested in the location of editor-in-chief Mikola Markevich. At the end of the interrogation Kulevich gave Mazheika a call-up subpoena for February 14 and warned him about of the possible accusation of violation of the Criminal Code. Most probably, Mazheika will be charged with violation of Art. 367 "Libel or slander towards the President of the Republic of Belarus". Most probably, the same charges will be brought against Mikola Markevich.

The Supreme Economic Court refused to lodge protest against its own decision of closing down "Pahonia". Deputy chairperson Yavoraw informed "Pahonia" editorial board about this decision on February 7. The letter says, "We have considered the facts in your supervisory complaint

and have not found any violations of the legislation".

It was December 10, 2001 when "Pahonia" addressed the chairperson of the Supreme Economic Court with a complaint against the SEC decision to close down the newspaper. At the same time the editorial board lodged a suit to the Hrodna Oblast Prosecutor's Office, asking to recognize and adjudge all the warnings as invalid.

SEC recommended filing a complaint to other officials, listed in Art. 200 of the Economic Code of Procedure. This article mentions the chairperson and his deputies of the SEC, and the Prosecutor General and his deputies.

On February 13 Markevich's property (a washing machine, a TV set and a vacuum cleaner) was attached-

seized. Markevich did not manage to pay the fine he had received for the participation in the unauthorized picket in defense of to defend his newspaper. In case the fine is not paid until February 18, the above mentioned articles will be confiscated.

On February 14 "Pahonia" editor-in-chief Mikola Markevich and journalist Pavel Mazheika were charged with libel against on the President of the Republic of Belarus. Let us remind you, that criminal charges of insulting the Belarusian President were brought against the newspaper "Pahonia" on September 6, 2001. The police confiscated all the editorial computers and 10 750 copies of the special issue, which was being printed. The special issue, which covered the presidential election, was supposed to come out in 88,000 copies.

"Pahonia" continues to be published in the Internet. "Pahonia" articles and the news about the development of the newspaper's case can be found at:

www.pagonia.promedia.minsk.by
and www.pagonia.com

№3(99)

LIFE AS IT IS

"Viasna"

The Bulletin of the Human Rights Centre

8 THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM

A "PRESENT" FOR THE PRESIDENT

LED TO THE INSTITUTION OF CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST NATALLA BREL

Rechyt'sa prosecutor allowed Natalla Brel and her lawyer Dzmitry Ivanishka to become familiar with all the materials of the criminal case of insulting the honor and dignity and libel against on Lukashenka. The prosecution needed 4,5 months for the investigation of the "present" to Lukashenka. On August 30, 2001 Natalla Brel passed the present for Lukashenka's birthday to the city administration. However, the chief of personnel department did not pass it to the addressee. He opened the box, and saw a rope, tied as a noose, and other stuff with attached notes. He passed the "birthday-box" to prosecutor's office.

On September 13 chief investigator Yuri Dzyamyanchyk lodged a criminal charge against UCP activist Natalla Brel for public insult of to Alexander Lukashenka. Later another charge was added – libel against on the President (Art. 367). Although Natalla spent 3 days behind the bars, she did not admit her guilt. She still hasn't confessed her fault. The only thing she did was to pack the presents, which had been prepared by Rechyt'sa residents, and to pass it to the city officials.

According to Prosecutor Budko, the investigator could file the case to court in November. But he did not receive an order from a higher official. Acting within his authority, the prosecutor extended the investigation for a month. Then they had to ask for permission to prolong the investigation for another 2 months. The term expires in February, but the case is still in the prosecutor's office. Natalla Brel is a post-graduate student of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences. She had to give a written undertaking not to leave the place, which hinders her studies. Ludmila Hraznova, member of the Supreme Soviet of the 13th convocation, had a chance to talk to Natalla.

– Natalla, I was really surprised, when I heard about the thing you had done. Could you explain what you did and what made you do that?

– This was a joint action of the UCP youth and the Young Front. I consider it our reaction to the day of August 30. One of our activists came up with an idea to make a public reaction to the date, and we decided to give a "present" to Lukashenka. We printed leaflets, which said that Lukashenka's birthday is on August 30, and asked the people to bring small gifts to him. We distributed the leaflets among young passers-by. Well, they



Natalla BREL.

Photo of "RG"

have brought the presents... We packed the things into a beautiful box. On August 30 a group of young people, me among them including me, brought the box to Uladzimir Viadzhun, staff member of the Rechyt'sa city administration. We purposefully chose that person. He was supervising the parliamentary and presidential elections. He is the chief of organizing and personnel department of the city administration. We knew that the election would be rigged. That's why we chose him.

– How did the authorities react to your action?

– We brought the "present" to the city administration and asked the official to pass it to the addressee. He told us, "No problem, guys. I will". Right after we came back, I received a pager message "There were 3 searches in Rechyt'sa. Happy holidays to you!" This day the police conducted a number of searches in Rechyt'sa, including my parents' apartment. But the criminal case was instituted a lot later. On September 4 I got registered as an observer on in my polling station. On September 5 they arrested me. A policeman came to the polling station and said that he had been ordered to bring me to the prosecutor's office for a talk. There investigator Yuri Dzyamyanchyk told me that they had instituted a criminal case on the fact of "delivery of the present". He showed me the documents and told me that I would be arrested. I was placed to the detention ward and spent 3 days there. All my motions about appointing my mother as my defender were rejected. We thought everything would be over within a month. But the investigators ran into a problem of a "victim". They had to

prolong pre-trial investigation for 3 months. At first prosecutor Budko extended the term for 1 month. The month passed, and the regional oblast prosecutor's office extended the investigation for 2 more months. They were just waiting for the order from Minsk.

– Natalla, you are a young girl. I know that you are in a post-graduate student at the studies of HHistory Institute of the Academy of Sciences. You are preparing your thesis. I wonder about the attitude of your parents to your present situation and to you personally. And my second question: how do criminal charges against you affect your career as a researcher?

– My parents love me very much. That was a real shock and a severe test for them. They are very worried about me. However, I think that they passed the test. They did not blame me, in spite of the really difficult situation. I thought they would reproach me, but they realize understand, what's happening in our country. They see, what's going on. They understand that I have become a victim of the system. I think it will be impossible for me to find a job in state-owned companies and educational establishments. I will have to work in the third sector. I hope for help of my friends.

– Natalla, by what article of the Criminal Code are you are charged with?

– Article 367, part Part 1, and Article 368, Ppart 1.

– What punishment do the articles provide for?

– A fine, corrective labor, and imprisonment for up to 4 years...

Noted down by
Ludmila HRAZNOVA.